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RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO PRIORITY 0726  
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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENTS ON HISPANIOLA DESIRE COOPERATION ON  
BORDER MANAGEMENT

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¶1. (U) This cable is sensitive, but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) Summary. A regional consultative meeting on travel document fraud, sponsored by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), brought together representatives of five Caribbean countries to discuss travel document fraud and the need to cooperate on tackling the cross-border crime that travel document fraud facilitates. The meeting included site visits to the Haitian-Dominican border at Malpasse-Jimani and the airport at Port-au-Prince. IOM in Haiti is seeking to channel this regional meeting into an ongoing consultation mechanism on cross-border migration. IOM officials also believe that Haitian and Dominican Republic officials now want to engage bilaterally on border management and security. IOM seeks USG support for this effort. End summary.

Opening Remarks

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¶3. (U) The International Organization for Migration (IOM) on December 6-7 sponsored a regional consultative meeting in Port-au-Prince on travel document fraud under its project, "Capacity Building in Migration Management" (CBMM), sponsored by the government of Canada. Five countries sent representatives: the Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, and Turks and Caicos-United Kingdom. Paul-Antoine Bien-Aime, the Minister of the Interior, and Jose Serulle Ramia, the Dominican Ambassador in Port-au-Prince, opened the meeting by indicating that they wanted to put in place a permanent mechanism for cooperation along the border. Ambassador Ramia went further by saying that the government of the Dominican Republic (GDR) and the GoH also understood that they must address border problems politically in order to support the necessary policy changes on border management. Ramia indicated that trafficking in persons, transnational crime, and terrorism -- not globalization -- are the urgent problems mandating that the GoH and the GDR share the burden

in dealing with migration.

#### Country Presentations

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14. (SBU) The Bahamas. Dwight Beneby, the Chief Immigration Officer at the Bahamian Immigration Department noted they are seeing less photo substitutions in passports but more fraudulent work permits, identity documents, and Bahamian visas. In addition to introducing machine-readable passports and new work permit cards, the Bahamian are conducting more investigations.

15. (SBU) The Dominican Republic. Carlos Castillo, the Dominican Consul General in Port-au-Prince, admitted his country's visa system was vulnerable to fraud. The GDR has issued new, machine-printed visa labels similar to those of the United States, and phasing out ink-stamp visas. In addition, the GDR has introduced digital passports with some biometric elements. Castillo admitted that Cuban nationals are using both Haiti and the Dominican Republic as transit points to the United States.

16. (SBU) Haiti. Jean Wilfrid Bertrand, Director General of the National Archives, noted that many Haitians in the interior provinces have no birth documents, and many life event documents, such as birth, marriage, and death certificates, are error-filled. The GoH's inability to register life events directly contributes to the production of false documents. The initial response of the National Archives has been to centralize document registration and authentication at the main National Archive in Port-au-Prince. Bertrand underscored that the real solution was computerization of all records, which he claimed is underway in Port-au-Prince, after which decentralization of the National Archives into the provinces must occur.

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17. (SBU) Jamaica. Cordel McFarlane, the Inspector of Police for the Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA), highlighted that individuals wanted by the authorities as well as deportees are most likely to use passports with substituted photographs in order to get a visa. PICA often encounters imposter fraud, genuine British passports fraudulently issued, altered passports and fraudulent visas. McFarlane noted that Jamaica is a transit point for human smuggling, with United States and United Kingdom the prime destinations. PICA encounters Indians with non-machine readable, and sometimes fraudulent, passports; Chinese nationals trying to pose as Japanese nationals for onward travel; persons from Belize claiming to be Jamaican residents; Sri Lankans claiming to want to travel to Canada but requesting asylum in the United States; and Guyanese nationals claiming to be Indian nationals. McFarlane also noted that persons traveling to and from Havana, Cuba pose special problems since their true travel intentions are often unclear.

18. (SBU) Turks and Caicos, United Kingdom. Benson Williams, Assistant Director of Immigration in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Public Safety, stated that Turks and Caicos is a transit point for human smuggling, with the United States and United Kingdom the prime destinations. Benson noted that a valid Turks and Caicos (British) passport is highly coveted for it enables a person to travel to the U.S., U.K. and all European Union countries without a visa. Benson noted that Nigerian and Indian nationals are heavily involved in trying to obtain genuine Turks and Caicos or U.K. passports. In response, Turks and Caicos has created a Special Police Immigration and Customs Enforcement (SPICE) unit. SPICE can enter any premises with "just cause", without a warrant. Turks and Caicos also has a computerized border control system that records entry and departure information, which is saved for 20 years.

¶9. (SBU) Turks and Caicos continued. In a separate meeting with Poloff, Williams noted that illegal sea migration to Turks and Caicos from Haiti is a continuing problem. Because traditional wooden boats fitted with motors coming from Haiti are likely to have illegal migrants or contraband onboard, Turks and Caicos has banned their entry into its waters. Nevertheless, Benson claimed there are weekly interceptions of such boats from Haiti. Moreover, his agents are now seeing American-made fiberglass or metal fast boats arriving from Haiti. These boats arrive in the dead of night, disembark about 20-25 migrants at a time, and then return to Haiti. Benson noted that a fast boat can make the one-way trip from Haiti to Turks and Caicos in three hours, and since these boats are permitted in Turks and Caicos territorial waters, the authorities cannot intercept them without cause. Another ruse is for a fast boat to arrive for legitimate commerce with its legal crew of six persons, but depart with only two or three persons onboard.

#### Site Visits

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¶10. (U) Malpasse, Haiti. On December 7, IOM escorted meeting participants to Malpasse, Haiti; Jimani, Dominican Republic; and the National Airport in Port-au-Prince to assess procedures at these immigration checkpoints. Adeclat Gracia, Supervisor for Immigration and Emigration at Malpasse, led the site visit. The border crossing at Malpasse appeared disorganized and under-resourced. Poloff could discern no order or procedure for clearing commercial traffic. The immigration and customs offices, which were co-located, were dark due to a lack of light bulbs, but electric fans were functioning. There were no computers, manual or electric adding machines, or visible accounting systems. Even though IOM had earlier installed doors and a toilet and painted the facility, the facility appeared

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ramshackle. IOM's CBMM project plans to install new computers, radios, and a solar energy collector to generate electricity. Gracia claimed that the Ministry of Interior stationed 18 immigration officers at the Malpasse border while the Ministry of Finance stationed 21 customs officers, not including the 2 persons to collect the duties. Garcia also said that there were six armed SWAT officers on site.

¶11. (U) Jimani, Dominican Republic. Ambassador Ramia led the site visit in Jimani. Immigration and customs are co-located at the Jimani border. The Jimani border crossing was well-organized in respect to parking, immigration, and customs. The facility appeared to have reliable electricity. There were functioning lights, electric adding machines, a typewriter, computers, and a security camera. At the immigration windows, there were posters on document identification, anti-corruption efforts and information on visa types and fees. There were also at least twenty armed security personnel. Ramia noted that the GDR does not incarcerate individuals with fake visas at Jimani; rather, it sends them back to Haiti.

¶12. (SBU) Port-au-Prince Airport. Guy Napoleon, Supervisor General of Immigration at the Port-au-Prince airport, led the site visit. The passport processing areas appeared to process travelers in an orderly, structured manner. The facility had reliable electricity and computer processing of machine readable passports. There were also closed-circuit cameras. In a presentation after the tour, Guy Napoleon mentioned that Cubans were using Haiti as a transit point for onward travel.

#### IOM Meeting Assessment

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¶13. (SBU) In an email to Poloff, Vincent Houver, IOM Chief of Mission in Haiti, wrote that he believes that the conference reflected increased interest from other countries

in the region in engaging Haiti in constructive dialogue on migration, trafficking in persons, and cross-border crime. Houver claimed that IOM is working with Haitian officials to channel this meeting into more regular regional consultations, at the working level and at a higher political level. IOM wants this process to produce bilateral exchanges and negotiations between the GDR and the GoH without excessive visibility or formality. The Haitian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Interior as well as the GDR, Houver said, are keen to pursue this track. Houver said he hopes to convene ministerial-level representatives from the region toward the end of the first quarter of 2008 to get the process started. Houver wanted to know the USG views on this initiative and to what extent the U.S. would support it.

Comment

114. (SBU) IOM achieved its ulterior goal for the meeting, which Houver defined as getting Haitian and Dominican authorities talking to each other about border management. The meeting was successful because: the GoH admitted that illegal migration of Haitians is an issue for which it must accept responsibility; Ministry of Interior officials at the highest levels now support engagement with the GDR over border management; and finally, the GDR appears to support engagement with the GoH as well. Houver identified Pierre Canisius Guignard, Director of the Direction of Political Affairs and Human Rights (DAPDH) in the Haitian Ministry of Interior, as the Haitian official who persuaded his colleagues that collaboration in border management, and hence the meeting, was long overdue. Dominican Ambassador Ramia strongly supported GDR engagement with Haiti, noting that the GDR strongly desires cooperation in border management, despite the high numbers of illegal Haitians the DR expels (16,000 in 2007). The GoH's desire to become more active in managing

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the Haitian-Dominican border may also stem from a desire to react to the expansion of MINUSTAH's mandate into border security. Post recommends that the USG support and encourage the current GoH-GDR consensus for cooperation in border management.  
SANDERSON